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## A STUDY OF IMPACT OF SKILL INDIA ON RURAL YOUTH

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### ABSTRACT

India occupies around 2.4% of the world's landmass. It is also home to 17.5% of the world's population. The density of population is more in the urban landscapes. However, being largely an agrarian economy, a significant part of India's GDP comes from the villages and rural areas. Rural development and prosperity is deeply integrated to any nation's growth. Skilled workers and entrepreneurs are the need of the hour with the government committed to improving the skill landscape in the country over the next few years. The mobilization of the available youth and man-power and making them as skilled individuals is the need of the hour with the burgeoning youth brigade of India. This paper focuses on the existing ecosystem for skill development in rural India and the role skill development has to play in the future for increasing employment and entrepreneurship opportunities among the youth of rural India.



**KEY WORDS :** Skill Development, Employment, Rural India, Youth, Entrepreneurship.

### INTRODUCTION

Rural development may be broadly defined as the process of improving the quality of life and the economic well-being of people living in isolated and sparsely populated areas. According to the Planning Commission, any town with a population of less than 15000 people is considered to be classified as rural area. According to the national sample survey organization, a rural area is one:

- which has a population of 400/sq km
- villages with clear surveyed boundaries but no municipal board
- that has a minimum of 75% of the working male population involved in agriculture activities.

As per the key findings of the 'State of the Urban Youth, India 2012: Employment, Livelihood, Skills,' a report published by IRIS Knowledge Foundation in collaboration with UNHABITAT, By 2020 the median individual age in India will be 29 years, very likely a city-dweller, making it the youngest country in the world. India is set to experience a dynamic transformation as the population burden of the past turns into a demographic dividend, but the benefits will be tampered with social and spatial inequalities. This creates a huge opportunity for the youth in India and will have to grab the global opportunities.

### BACKGROUND :

Mahatma Gandhi, the father of the nation said that India's strength lies in its villages. Rural areas contribute significantly to the overall growth and economic development of a country. A statistics states that of the roughly 5.98 billion people who live in the world, close to 3.4 billion people live in villages/rural areas.

However, many issues still plague the villages of India such as poverty, water scarcity, malnourishment, lack of basic facilities, illiteracy, unemployment, anti-social elements etc. While many of these exist from time immemorial, unemployment seems to be the major threat in today's scenario with the ever growing population, and India is expected to outgrow China as the world's largest populated country. India sits on a goldmine of raw talent waiting to be nurtured, developed and added to the HR pool. Effective utilization of resources and availability of skilled individuals help in ensuring that developmental activities do not get compromised. This is where skill development plays a major role. Skill is required:

- To improve employment
- Reduce poverty
- Provide livelihood opportunities
- Enhance productivity
- Promote environmentally sustainable development

#### INITIATIVES OF GOVERNMENT OF INDIA:

The Government of India, on its part has initiated 2 programs, Skill India and Make in India to create a framework for skill development and entrepreneurship activities in the country. Skill India's primary objective is to ensure a well-established infrastructure for skill development and focus on professional skills and employment oriented training in order to create skilled labour workforce. Young Indians must be prepared not just for domestic markets but also for the international labour markets which are in line with the PM's vision of Make in India, the skill capital of the world. Make in India is another major initiative to encourage manufacturing activities in India, especially the rural areas which has a tremendous potential to be an intriguing feature in manufacturing export activities of the country (e.g. handicrafts, handlooms, textiles, herbal products etc.). The Government has relaxed the FDI norms to encourage domestic and foreign companies to manufacture in India and contribute to the rise in GDP. As per the report by Ministry of Labour & Employment of India, unemployment among rural youth in India is highest today since 1993-94. About 5% of the rural youth between 15-29 years remain unemployed. This is an alarming situation if the most energetic and productive generation of our country is being wasted. The Central Government on its part is leaving no stone unturned. The annual budget of 2017-18 allocated for employment generation, skill and livelihood is pegged at an approximate value of Rs.17, 000 Cr [2] where the Ministry for Skill Development and Entrepreneurship is allocated Rs.3000 Cr. Some of the other salient features in the budget relating to skill development are as follows [2]:

1. PMKK (Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Kendra) which are currently present in over 60 districts is planned to be opened in 600 more districts.
2. 100 India International Skill Centres which offer training services and foreign language coaching are expected to be established all over the country.
3. Launch of Skill Acquisition and Knowledge Awareness for Livelihood Promotion Program (SANKALP) at a cost of 4000 Cr to provide market relevant training to over 3.5 Cr youth.
4. The next phase of Skill Straightening for Industrial Value Enhancement (STRIVE to be launched) at a cost of Rs. 2200 Cr which focuses on improving quality and market relevance of vocational training provided in ITIs and strengthen the apprenticeship programs through industry cluster approach.
5. A special scheme for increasing employment in leather, footwear, textile sectors is launched. Textile is in fact the 2 nd largest employer in the country after agriculture with a current workforce of 33-35 million which is expected to increase to over 60-62 million by 2022.
6. Allocation of Rs.4500cr for Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana for promotion of skill development in rural areas.
7. The budget allocation for PM's employment generation program (PMEGP) has increased by 3 times.
8. For imparting new skills to the people in rural areas, mason training to be provided for over 5 lakh people by 2022 with an immediate target of 20000 by 2017-18.
9. In order to foster the emergence of technology which plays an important role in new age start-ups, high speed broadband is expected to be provided to over 1.5 lakh villages.

Apart from these, there is Aajeevika which is the skilling and placement initiative of the Ministry of Rural Development (MoRD) whose aim is to impart a specific set of knowledge and skills to rural youth

without formal education and make them job ready. The Ministry of Rural Development has been allocated Rs.1500 Cr from the yearly budget for its flagship scheme NRLM (National Rural Livelihood Mission) which trains unemployed youth below poverty line on various skills. In all, 73 skill development schemes are implemented in 20 ministries.

#### **PERSPECTIVE:**

Proper identification of skill challenges faced by people in rural areas, finding out what works in promoting and sustaining skill development in rural areas, enumerating the measures taken to boost employment in rural areas in both agricultural and nonagricultural sectors and discovering the skills which are foreseen to be in high demand in the coming years are some of the strategies which needs to be taken for integrated rural development. Skill development activities need to be done in a cost efficient way in order to have a sustainable development over a long term. It must be directed towards mainly improving the gender equality and social inclusion in rural areas. The private sector must also actively participate and should also introduce technology enabled skill development initiatives..

#### **SUGGESTIONS:**

According to the author, skill development policies for rural development, when they are designed must ideally have the following aspects:

1. It must meet the demands and requirements of the current scenario. It must be relevant to today's needs and necessities.
2. It must have the capability to withstand any shortcomings or mismatches in the society.
3. It must ideally be designed with a futuristic outlook and a model which can be scaled and adapted for the challenges ahead in the future.
4. It must be a coordinated and cooperative effort from the government, academia and the industry regarding designing the framework and pedagogy of study
5. It must be holistic in its approach and thereby create unison between different sections of the society thereby mitigate social and gender stigma and practices.
6. Depending upon the natural resources available in a particular area/region, skill development initiatives and courses relevant to that resource utilization can be linked/framed so as to have perfect demand-supply ratio of workforce. This will also ensure that no migration activity happens between regions and that native individuals can find employment in their homeland itself.
7. Popularizing and propagating the idea of rural development among the youth by introducing "Rural development management" courses in educational institutions, conducting competitions and hackathons for the purpose of solving problems faced by rural areas through implementation of science and technology. Collecting a range of these solutions and implementing them every year gives a smart and efficient way to deal with these problems. Introduce the practice of community service hours (already followed in western countries) for every student and working professional as part of their credits. This practice is already followed in the west, but reworking it to suit our sensibilities is the need of the hour.

#### **CONCLUSION**

While the Government of India is hugely investing in skill development initiatives for the future, there is widespread concern among the industry and academia that the efforts may not be sufficient to avoid a skill scarcity in the future. The opportunity for India largely lies with skilling the youth in the country. Hence there is a need to align the efforts of the Government with the Industry that will pave way to successful implementation of the programs, thereby enabling the skilled manpower for the nation by 2020. The PM has approved the country's first integrated national policy for skill development and entrepreneurship. In his own words, skill development in India should envision the "Creation of an ecosystem of empowerment by skilling on a large scale at speed with high standards and promote a culture

of innovation based entrepreneurship generating wealth and employment and ensuring sustainable livelihoods for all.”

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